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Letter dated 2 May 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated 10 April 2000 in connection with the Russian-Armenian military exercises which were carried out from 27 to 30 March 2000 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Eldar G. **Kouliev**
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 2 May 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Azerbaijani Republic

From 27 to 30 March 2000, at the Marshal Bagramyan military training ground in the Armavir district, as part of the 2000 programme of military cooperation between the Russian Federation and Armenia, command staff training was carried out with the participation of personnel of the 102nd Russian base at Gyumri and Erevan and of the national army of Armenia.

The purpose of the training was to improve military preparedness in mountain and forest conditions. The training was directed by the commander of a group of Russian troops in the Caucasus, Lieutenant-General Vladimir Andreev. Representatives of the illegal regime which seized power in the Nagorny Karabakh region of Azerbaijan by force, headed by the "Minister of Defence" of the so-called "Nagorny Karabakh Republic", S. Oganyan, were invited to the training session with a view to "raising the level of experience".

Such training, aimed at enhancing Armenian-Russian military cooperation and the military potential of the Russian-Armenian armed forces, gives rise to legitimate concern on the part of Azerbaijan.

This concern is above all linked to the current unstable political situation in Armenia, the actual freezing by the Armenians of the settlement of the conflict over Nagorny Karabakh and the process of the talks while Armenia holds 20 per cent of Azerbaijani lands under occupation.

The signing on 1 March 2000 of a protocol on the transfer without compensation of the territory and property of the 102nd Russian military base from Kafan to Gyumri for a period of 25 years, and the signing on 16 March of a treaty between the Ministers of Defence of the Republic of Armenia and the Russian Federation on joint military responsibilities in the area of anti-aircraft defence and of duties and authority, and the representation on Russian military training grounds of Armenian forces for military training is regarded by Azerbaijan as an expansion of the military presence of Russia in Armenia and an expansion of the military cooperation between those two countries. This is dangerous for the region, and it is following this situation with grave concern.

Despite the statement by the leaders of the Russian Federation and of the Republic of Armenia that the Armenian-Russian military cooperation is not directed against any third State, including Azerbaijan, the purpose and functions of the recent command staff training, to which a delegation was invited, reveal their real essence.

The insolent statement by the Chief of the General Staff of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Armenia, M. Artyunyan, as he was about to address the Council of Europe, that "with the help of the united military forces the Azerbaijani army will be destroyed in accordance with the rules of military science" once again

makes it clear that our neighbouring State has not yet abandoned the principle of the use of force against our Republic and is using this training for its own purposes.

Azerbaijan considers that the carrying out of such training violates the military and political balance existing in the region and is an obstacle to trust between Armenia and Azerbaijan and the establishment of a situation of peace, stability and security in general in the South Caucasus, and it considers that all that jeopardizes the process of talks between the parties involved in the conflict, as well as the ceasefire regime. It believes that the strengthening of the military presence of Russia in Armenia creates a serious threat to the implementation of the concept of regional security.

Such military training, aimed at strengthening Armenian-Russian military cooperation still further, is contrary to the policy line proclaimed by the Russian leadership on the attainment by the States in the South Caucasus of stability, peace and mutual trust in the region on the basis of the principle of territorial integrity, and is detrimental to the image of Russia as a neutral intermediary in the settlement of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorny Karabakh. If one considers that Russia is one of the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and has assumed serious responsibilities for the settlement of the conflict, the carrying out by Russia of military training with one of the parties to the conflict once again raises doubts about its role as a fair arbitrator.

Azerbaijan places full responsibility for bringing the situation in the region to an unstable turn on certain subversive forces in the Russian Federation and Armenia which are responsible for the aggressive policy carried out in the South Caucasus region, and retains its right to take any appropriate measures that may be necessary to ensure its security.

In addition, on the basis of the principles of common interests related to the security of the Azerbaijani Republic and of all the States of the region, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Azerbaijani Republic calls upon the Russian Federation to suspend plans to expand and strengthen the military alliance between the Russian Federation and Armenia until the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorny Karabakh has been settled, and to reconsider its position on this question.

10 April 2000